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UNITY

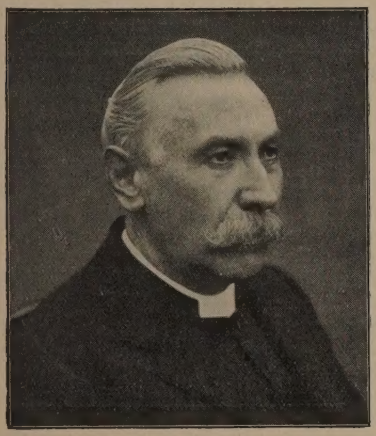
AN ORGAN OF REASONABLE RELIGION

The Unitarian MONTHLY

"One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves!" Tennyson

FAITH
FREEDOM
FELLOWSHIP

No. 136. [Vol. XII.—1] January, 1915. ONE PENNY.



Rev. H. E. PERRY,
STOCKPORT.

The Rev. Herbert Edward Perry belongs to an old Unitarian family attached to the High Pavement Chapel, Nottingham. His paternal grandmother sat in three successive chapel buildings. His maternal grandfather, Mr. Thos. Parslee, of Harleston in Norfolk, helped to establish new causes in that county and conducted the services when pulpit supplies were not otherwise available. Very early in boyhood Mr. Perry with his brother Charles accompanied their father to Sunday school. While still in short jackets young Herbert Perry became a Sunday school teacher, having his brother Charles and the late Rev. F. W. Stanley as fellow workers under the influence of the Rev. R. A. Armstrong, then minister at the High Pavement, through whom the two elder ones quite early left business and went into training for the ministry, Mr. Perry not deciding for the ministry until later in life. His brother Charles became minister of Hope-street Church, Liverpool, in which position he died after five years happy and strenuous work to the intense grief of all who knew him. Mr. Herbert Perry was many years secretary of the High Pavement Sunday School, and was afterwards its superintendent; was secretary for some years of N. Midland Sunday School Association. After some time in business in a bank at Long Eaton and later at Ilkeston, at which latter place he was one of the founders of the Mechanics' Institute, he settled in Wolverhampton, married the daughter of the late Mr. Geo. Hopkins, treasurer of our Kidderminster Church, became largely instrumental in the re-opening of the Wolverhampton Chapel, held the office of its treasurer, and was appointed a trustee. He faithfully supported this cause, and by his personal efforts raised a special fund which enabled the Midland Christian Union to secure the appointment of a settled minister. He was treasurer of the Wolverhampton Literary and Scientific Society and president of the Photographic Society. He was a visitor for the Midland S.S. Association, and became its president. In 1906 Mr. Perry accepted an invitation to be co-pastor at Denton with the Rev. Lawrence Scott, where owing to the removal of Mr. Scott and family to Switzerland the ministerial work was left wholly to him. During this Denton ministry by means of a bazaar the chapel was re-decorated, the organ rebuilt, and £800 debt on the Endowment property was paid off. Mr. Perry settled as minister at Stockport in 1911; his work there has been characterised with earnestness and success, as may be seen from the account of the congregation on another page of this issue. He has been secretary of the East Cheshire Christian Union (of Churches), and is now president of the N. Cheshire Unitarian S.S. Union; he is also secretary to the Systematic Religious Instruction Committee of the Manchester District S.S. Association. Mr. Perry has five children. His eldest daughter, a medical student at Manchester University, has gained the Dauntsey Scholarship in addition to a Scholarship from the Manchester High School for Girls; his eldest son, an engineer, has joined the P. S. and V. Corps, and is training with His Majesty's forces at Epsom as a signaller. From this excellent record of public service, denominational, and ministerial work, it is evident that in Mr. Perry the Unitarian ministry is efficiently and ably represented in Stockport.

Home Circle.

New Year.

New Year, I look straight in your eyes—
  Our ways and interests blend;
You may be a foe in disguise,
  But I shall believe you a friend.
We get what we give in our measure,
  We cannot give pain and get pleasure;
I give you good will and good cheer,
  And you must return it, New Year.

You hide in your mystical hand
  No "luck" that I cannot control,
If I trust my own courage and stand
  On the infinite strength of my soul;
Man holds in his brain and his spirit
  A power that is Godlike, or near it,
And he who has measured his force
  Can govern events and their course.

You come with a crown on your brow,
  New Year, without blemish or spot;
Yet you, and not I, sir, must bow,
  For time is the servant of thought.
Whatever you bring me of trouble,
  Shall turn into good, and then double,
  If my spirit looks up without fear,
To the source that you came from, New Year.

—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

"Chronicles of Parson Pimm"

(2nd Series)

By the Author of "Love that casts our fear," etc.

I.—THE NEW YEAR WELCOMED.

These chronicles are fact, not fiction, those already recorded, and the others that are now to be told.

Parson Pimm and his family resolved to begin the New Year by having a short holiday away from home. It was to be only a week-end, from Saturday to Tuesday morning, but it was to be a thorough change of scene and of company. So they went away into the hill-country to a holiday Guest House.

It was a large mansion situated in beautifully wooded grounds, and there was a party of from seventy to eighty guests of both sexes, of various ages from eighteen up to sixty or seventy years, the younger people being the majority.

Parson Pimm was the only minister in the company, but he dressed much like other men and did not unnecessarily obtrude the nature of his professional vocation upon public notice.

In a theological sense too, the company was very mixed. There were Methodists, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Unitarians, Agnostics, and other varieties of what is called "New Thought.' '

On Sunday morning some went out to attend service at a place of worship of their own choice. Others formed a walking party; while those who remained in the house had a united service in the drawing room.

On the previous evening the guests had been put on good terms with each other by joining in old-time games in the large entrance hall, mixed with dances, or by sharing in table games, and conversation in the drawing-room, where also some of the guests contributed songs and recitations for the entertainment of the company. The fact, too, that they all met at meal times in the large dining room helped to make them more acquainted with each other. Thus, though most of them were strangers to each other when they came they were by Sunday afternoon on terms of pleasant mutual intercourse.

It was part of the organisation of this great house that some specially well-known guest was appointed responsible head or director of the company to see that the rules were adhered to. At this time this head authority was an elderly man of about sixty-five years of age, a manufacturer of good social position, and an ex-Mayor of the town from which he came. He was a good fellow, a Methodist in religion, and somewhat rigid and strait-laced in matters of conduct and behaviour. He evidently held certain sabbatarian notions in the light of which the conduct of some of the young people on Sunday was matter for his strong disapproval.

On Sunday afternoon a fair number of the young people were seated round the huge log fire in the large entrance hall telling tales. The rest of the company who had not gone out for a walk were in the drawing-room reading or seated in groups engaged in friendly chat, including the director, Mr. K—— and his wife.

Every now and then there were noises from the entrance hall, great bursts of laughter, clapping of hands, and sounds of general boisterousness, which somewhat disturbed older people in the drawing room. This noise was so frequent that at last Mr. K—— went out to the younger folks and in a rather peremptory fashion reproved them for what he called "disorderly conduct"—"on a Sunday afternoon too." Some of the seniors amongst the young people resented his dictatorial manner, and told him that they were open to reasonable persuasion but not to dictation

"You must obey the rules of the house," said Mr. K—— rather angrily.

'Do the rules prohibit our laughing on Sundays," asked one.

"No, they don't, but they do require considerate and decent behaviour."

"What do you call decent behaviour?"

"Well, it is not decent or decorous behaviour to make boisterous noises here on Sunday, and it is not considerate of the feelings of other guests who have some respect for the day," rejoined Mr. K——.

"But we are not in church," Mr. K——, "and though perhaps we have been a bit too noisy, it is not fair to

attempt to tie us down to old and narrow notions of Sunday."

Now several of these younger men and women were members of the teaching profession. They were very intelligent persons and could argue on questions so as to be more than a match for Mr. K——. So he felt considerably annoyed; and when they asked: "Shall we sit up and see the old year out and the New Year in to-night?" he replied,

"No, that you won't. It is Sunday, and the rule is that guests must retire at 10-30 on Sunday evenings."

"But the rules are for general guidance; they make no provision for New Year's Eve, so that for exceptional circumstances you can surely use your discretion."

"We shall follow the rules. You were very late retiring last night and you ought to be satisfied. We shall all retire at 10-30."

This caused smouldering rebellion in the young people. There was considerable talk amongst them and some plotting; and there was soreness of feeling.

After tea the people in the drawing room were seated in groups including some who had been amongst the noisy ones in the afternoon.

Parson Pimm was one of a large semi-circle of people seated around the front of the principal fireplace. A lady seated near his right said to him:

"Isn't it a pity that we cannot sit up and see the old year out?"

"Yes, it is; but I suppose the fact that it is Sunday is considered an objection."

"Why that should be I cannot understand" said the lady; "for at many places of worship there will be a watch-night service to-night, and we might have had something appropriate here. I think it is a great mistake on the part of Mr. K—— to say there shall be nothing."

"So it is; there should be something. I feel so myself. Do you think there are many others here who would like it?"

"Yes, I am sure of it. I know several in the room who had nothing to do with the young people this afternoon who will be very disappointed if there is nothing."

"Then I will go and make a suggestion to Mr. K—."

And Parson Pimm went to Mr. K—— and told him that several people in that room would be disappointed if there were no watch-night meeting of some kind to welcome the New Year in, and asked him whether if the majority desired such a meeting in keeping with Sunday evening, would he consent to it. Mr. K—— seemed to jump at the idea as a good way out of the unpleasantness, and readily agreed that if there was a general wish for it he would raise no objection. So Mr. Pimm told the company what had been suggested and said that if it were generally wished there would be a watch-night meeting to welcome in the New Year. He took a show of hands, and only one person objected, all the rest voting for it, the objector, a lady, explaining that she herself desired to retire early and not to be required to sit up till midnight.

Then Parson Pimm went into the entrance hall where most of the younger people were congregated, and said:

"May I have your kind attention for a few moments?"

Then all eyes were turned expectantly upon him and he explained:

"A suggestion has been made in the drawing-room that we have a watchnight meeting to see the old year out and the new year in. This has been put to the vote in the drawing room and agreed to. Mr. K—— has also consented to it, and now I am come to you to tell you of it, and to invite you all to join us so that not one of you shall be out of it who can possibly come. I know there has been a little friction this afternoon, and no doubt there have been faults on both sides, for there are none of us perfect; but this will be a fine opportunity of brushing all that aside as if it had never happened and of finishing up the old year with good feeling towards everybody. There will not be so much gladness in any of our hearts unless you join us. Of course, New Year's Eve falling on a Sunday, the meeting must be in keeping with Sunday in a reasonable and sensible way without being 'goody-goody'; say, one or two thymns such as "Lead, kindly light," some songs, one or two recitations, a short address, and a New Year's greeting and shake of the hand all round to finish with."

Their faces brightened and they joyfully agreed. So Mr. K——, whose face was much brighter too, asked Mr. Pimm to take the whole thing in hand and carry it through. Consequently a good programme was arranged to commence at 11-30, including some appropriate solos and recitations from the reconciled young people, and a song from Mr. K—— himself; a lady read Tennyson's "Ring out wild bells," Parson Pimm spoke briefly but earnestly on "Looking Forward," and just before twelve all joined in singing "Lead, kindly light"; and then there were hearty greetings and New Year's wishes all round, everybody being delighted at the way they had let the New Year in.

So ended the old year with nothing but good feeling and the New Year began all the more happily.

NEW YEAR THOUGHTS.

Glance at your hour glass. The sands of time are running down. Time is life. Lose five minutes daily and the loss amounts to 35 in a week, two and a half hours in a month, 30 hours in a year or four good working days of 7½ hours each. —E.R.H.

"Time was, is past; thou canst not it recall:
Time is, thou hast; employ the portion small;
Time future, is not; and will never be;
Time present is the only time for thee."

"To thine own self be true." —(Shakespeare.)

"We are all prone to keep the level of those we live with, and hence the tameness of our characters and lives." "Habits, though in their commencement like the filmy line of a spider, trembling at every breeze, may in the end, prove as links of tempered steel, binding a deathless being to unknown felicity or woe."

Buddhism and War.

By Rev. WILLIAM C. HALL, M.A.

If we would understand Buddhism we must study it not only as a theology, or a philosophy of life, involving great speculations concerning the relation of the soul of man to the Universal Soul, but also, and particularly, as a religion which gives a few simple instructions, exhortations, and encouragements to a certain kind of life. It will be well to read the books of Mr. Fielding Hall, especially "The Soul of a People," in which it is shown how the faith of the Buddha was incarnated in the life of the Burmese people, a people purely Buddhist, without the admixture of other faiths so common to Easterns. No religion can be properly understood simply through the consideration of its scripture. For this understanding it is necessary to consider the practical relation of creed to life, and of life to creed. This inter-relation is most clearly shown in Mr. Fielding Hall's books.

In "The Soul of a People" the author tells how when the British invaded Upper Burmah they at first met with no resistance. The explanation was that Buddhism, although more highly organised than the political government, had no form of organisation that was of any use whatever for repelling the invader. For all the assistance it was to them in the war, the Burmese might have had no faith at all. Eight months later they resisted. The explanation of this resistance was that for the time being they threw their religion to the winds, well knowing the spiritual penalties in which they were involved. They fought for their homes, in peril of forfeiting the peace of Nirvana. For Buddhism said, "Thou shalt take no life,' and there was no exception to that law, not even for a patriot fighting for his country. "Thou shalt not take the life even of him who is the enemy of your king and country." To engage in war, to take life in any form was to violate the eternal laws which the Buddha had revealed. But the Burmese fought, like heroes reckless of fate, in violation of what they counted their highest faith and the laws that were supreme among the laws that governed their life.

Here was a remarkable collision between religion and patriotism; a collision not because they were antagonistic, but because, paradoxically, they were independent. Religion was one thing, patriotism another. But religion was of peace, and could have no concern with a patriotism that was at war. To defend their country these poor Burmese had very literally to risk their souls: the price they had to pay for their patriotism was the price of their salvation. Could we not admire them in that they were willing to pay it? And could we not admire the religion that involved them in so great a sacrifice? Whatever its impracticability in the present state of nations, Buddhism had the grip of a fundamental truth, that the life of every man is sacred, and the life of beast, that all life is of the whole.

One of the impressive circumstances about Buddhism is that it does not offer its followers an easy way and entrance into the kingdom of their souls' desire. The way is one of many renunciations, many self-suppressions and self-effacements. The only glory it offers is peace. That is the ultimate thing all men crave—peace for the soul until all the soul is peaceful. It is a peace that is in contrast with all the things of the world; and Buddhism rigidly applies the idea of it to a removal of the soul from all the sensuous experiences the world affords.

The mighty physical exhilaration of warfare, the emotional vigour of man at strife with man, it condemns. Such are inconsistent with the true life which is the repose of the soul, and with the thought of life as a thing holy in itself, too beautiful to be marred and slain, too much of the life that is the whole to be shaken and disturbed. War between nations, strife between man and man, it cannot tolerate; all that sunders souls, the souls of peoples, the souls of individual human beings, it censures.

For the Buddhist, true to the commands of his religion, there can be no war; he ceases to follow the great teacher whenever, for whatever reason, he turns aside from the quest of the Great Peace

Religion and Religions.

By Rev. J. PARK DAVIES, B.A., B.D.

There was a time, not so very long ago, when such a statement as "Religion and Religions" would meet with strong objection. Christianity was the only true faith; all else was superstitition. Readers of Fielding will remember how Parson Thwackum said in "Tom Jones" that he understood by religion the Christian religion, and not only the Christian religion but the Protestant religion, and not only the Protestant religion, but the Church of England. There we have the same attitude pushed a little further. This tendency to identify religion with our own particular system is not uncommon. It has existed among others besides Christians. The warning of the Deuteronomist breathes a similar sentiment when he says: "Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun and the moon and the stars, even all the host of heaven, thou be drawn away and worship them, and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all the peoples under the whole heaven. But the Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as at this day" (Deut. iv., 15, 19-20). According to this passage Israel alone had direct knowledge of God. All others had to satisfy themselves with the worship of material creation. Deuteronomy is not the most backward book in the Bible. Fortunately it is not the most forward either. Not a few of the Old Testament prophets possessed a much wider outlook. Starting from their position Jesus and Paul were able to expand the religious horizon to such an extent as to include the whole family of mankind. Significant in this connexion are the words of the apostle to the Athenians

n the Areopagus: "The God that made the world and ll things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, velleth not in temples made with hands; neither is e served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, nd all things; and he made of one every nation of en for to dwell on all the face of the earth, having etermined their appointed seasons, and the bounds f their habitation; that they should seek God, if aply they might feel after him, though he is not far om each one of us; for in him we live and move, nd have our being" (Acts xvii., 24-28). These words erit a place side by side with the saying of Jesus o the woman of Samaria by the well of Jacob: Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither n this mountain (Gerizim), nor in Jerusalem, shall e worship the Father. But the hour cometh, and ow is, when the true worshippers shall worship the ather in spirit and in truth: for such doth the Father eek to be his worshippers. God is spirit: and they hat worship him must worship in spirit and truth." John iv., 21-24). These familiar quotations have een given at some length because they embody a ital truth. Still it has not always been remembered. Despite the fact that it had behind it the highest iblical authority it was for many centuries almost ntirely forgotten. Happily it has of recent years een once again resuscitated. The change may be ttributed to influences which were set at liberty at he time of the Reformation. This was a period of uickening in various directions. In different departments enterprise followed upon enterprise in quick uccession. Classical literature was re-studied; closer bservation of the phenomena of nature was prosecuted; new countries were discovered; sailors, soldiers, xplorers, merchants, missionaries, were thus enabled o visit hitherto unexplored regions; ancient sites ere excavated; sacred books of old civilizations were rought to the light of day and translated. On the trength of the information derived from these and ther sources which space will not permit us to mention there was gradually formed the science that is ow known by the none too appropriate name of "Comparative Religion." One of the first conclusions erived from a study of this subject was this: that as ar as is known, no people has ever existed without ome kind of religion. Nor is it permissible to draw a istinction between the various instances with which e are acquainted in such a way as to place the false n the one side and the true on the other. It is evident that all of them are in some measure divinely nspired, while none—not even our own—can claim to e final and perfect. This consideration makes it ecessary that we should look at religion from a broad nd sympathetic standpoint. Lord Morley says that eligion has received no less than ten thousand definiions. Perhaps one of the most acceptable is that laborated by Edward Caird in his two volumes on he evolution of religion. He maintains that religion neans no less than the whole relation of man—physially, mentally, morally, spiritually—to God and the Jniverse. From this definition it follows that whenever our inner life is developed or our knowledge of the world around us is increased, the relation between the two is correspondingly modified. Religion can never be quite fixed and stationary. From this it further follows that theology which is the external garb of religion has to be continually re-shaped. Could we only realise this truth much of the hostility which warring sects feel towards one another would inevitably disappear. It is not to be expected that forms of religion should be always and everywhere identical. Systems of faith will differ in accordance with the varying conditions under which they are born and developed. Climate, migration, associations, temperament, mental status—these and other forces all count in the shaping of a religion. Where a large number of people live under circumstances that are in all essentials similar there we come across one of the great historical systems Thus we have Zoroastrianism among the Persians; Confucianism among the Chinese; Shintoism among the Japanese; Buddhism and Hinduism among the Indians; Mohamedanism among the Arabs; Judaism among the Israelites; Christianity among ourselves. These are of necessity coloured by the time and place in which they grew. Through what is best in each of them we are afforded rich glimpses of the one spiritual and universal religion which is behind all and of which all are genuine but imperfect expressions.

DUTY AND GLORY

It is interesting to note that our national heroes, Nelson and Wellington, spoke always of "duty," and never of "glory." It is indeed a remarkable fact that in their despatches Wellington and Napoleon offered such a glaring contrast to each other. The Englishman never sent a despatch that omitted the word "duty" or contained the word "glory." The Corsican, on the contrary, never omitted the word "glory" or referred to "duty." May our Commanders this time be able to use both!

Amongst the killed was one Cornet, the Colonel's only son.

"I glanced at the Colonel, and saw that the muscles of his face did not quiver. He sat on his horse like a statue. After a brief pause—'Where is the dead Cornet?' The spot was indicated. He rode up to his dead son, bent down over the body, raised the head and gazed long into his son's face. Then he kissed his lips and brow, made a sign of the cross, remounted, and rode off to attend to his duties."

According to the "Jewish World," the Chief Rabbi of Lyons has been killed on the battlefield.

While tending Jewish soldiers he had been called to the side of a dying trooper, a Roman Catholic, who presumably thinking he was a priest begged the Rabbi to exhibit before his eyes the symbol of his faith and give him his blessing.

It was while holding a crucifix before the mortally wounded warrior and whispering to him words of comfort that the Rabbi fell a victim to an enemy missile.

National Conference Guilds' Union.

President: Rev. W. H. LAMBELLE. Hon. Sec.: Rev. H. FISHER SHORT.

Motto: "FOR GOD AND THE GOOD LIFE."

Monthly Message: "A NEW YEAR."

The War, which has stirred most of us to our depths and made us tingle with sensations of undreamt of vitality, has had a very different effect upon many. It has made them sombre and solemn. So much so that they imagine it is their duty to discourage enjoyment in every form. Their solemnity overflows into the Press in protests against sport and amusements, and in attempts to banish laughter from the national life. Lugubrious themselves, they are in no humour to wish their friends a Happy New Year.

Imbued with a deep sorrow for their country, it would be unkind to describe them as unpatriotic; saddened and humiliated by what they believe to be an eclipse of Christianity by an upheaval of barbarism, it would be unjust to say they are unchristian. But, surely there is room and urgent need for a Patriotism and a Christianity other than theirs.

Though the dead cannot be wished back to life, or the maimed be wished back to wholeness, those impossibilities ought not to make us miserable for ever. For thousands the world cannot be quite the same again; to the end of life will they bear on their hearts the wounds and death of dear ones: but if the flower of joy is never to bloom again those dear ones have bled and died in vain.

We know, however late or soon, through sheer exhaustion, the War must come to an end; we know, too, despite the present set-back, the Christian ideal of a world peace will survive to be cherished and striven for; hence, whilst deprecating foolish levity, and callous indifference to the grave crisis through which we are passing; whilst condemning the drunkenness and rowdyism in which thousands still indulge, we put in our plea for a healthier patriotism and a more heroic Christianity, a christian patriotism manifesting itself in faith and hope, in courage and cheer. If ever the world needed cheer-givers and joy-bringers it needs them now; and, at the beginning of a New Year, their price is far above rubies.

Here is an opportunity for our Guilds to show the spirit they are of. Let every Guild be a Guild of Christian patriots, of comforters and encouragers; and its members shall consecrate God's latest gift, making it a thing of health and hope and quiet joy, in a word, a Happy New Year.

Why "Intercession"?

It is strange to find the use of the word "intercession" used to designate meetings held for the purpose of praying for peace One is at a loss to know whether it denotes a misconception concerning Deity or simply the perpetuation of words and phrases outgrown. The term denotes the belief that God is able to stop the war and will not do it unless there is special supplication on behalf of those who suffer therefrom. Surely no modern mind can believe in such a conception. It repudiates the love and wisdom of God, and harks back to the Deity whose favourable action might be secured by frenzied appeal. To pray for peace may express the normal desire of the individual, but to beg God to "intercede" postulates either a God outside the universe or careless of what happens within it. Is it not rather true that God is doing for peace all that human power and willing permit, and that the only kind of intercession that has any unpagan significance is that with those men and women who have the power to will and achieve peace? Is it not true that God through all the centuries has been praying to man to bring about the realization of the Christ-song of peace and good will, and that the highest duty of man is to discover within himself the answer to that prayer?

—The "Christian Register."

Milton's Appeal.

In his DEDICATION addressed TO ALL THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST, AND TO ALL WHO PROFESS THE CHRISTIAN FAITH THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, John Milton says:—"I earnestly beseech all lovers of truth, not to cry out that the Church is thrown into confusion by that freedom of discussion and inquiry which is granted to the schools and ought certainly to be refused to no believer, since we are ordered TO PROVE ALL THINGS, and since the daily progress of the light of truth is productive far less of disturbance to the Church than of illumination and edification."

THE VAST UNKNOWN.

LET us go forth as they who love the way,
Who still can travel with unwearying feet
And with good heart with high adventures meet;
Let neither fear of danger us dismay,
Nor doubt, that most destroys the will, delay;
But, shod with strength, and clad with faith complete,
Let us press on as they who cheering greet
The vast unknown, the surely-broadening day.

Ah, then, before we think of eventide,
Ere gathering twilight dims the hills around
And travellers dream of rest and quiet sleep,
We shall have lived through glorious hours, and found
Some gladness that shall with us long abide
And many a good our souls shall ever keep.

W. C. Hall.

Literature.

"Cranford," by Mrs. Gaskell, illustrated by E. H. New, with an introduction by E. V. Lucas, and new notes by the Rev. G. A. Payne, of Knutsford. 3s. 6d. net, Methuen and Co., 36, Essex-street, Strand, London, W.C.

"Gathered Fragments," by H. W. Hawkes, 3s. 6d. net, by post from the author, 59, Trinity-road, Bootle.

"Helpers and Hinderers," by Lilian Hall, 1s. net, Sunday School Association, Essex Hall, Essex-street, London, W.C.

Mrs. Gaskell's delightful story of "Cranford" is described as the tenderest and most delicate of English classics. "If I live at all," said Mrs. Gaskell once to her daughter, "it will be through 'Cranford.'." It is admittedly her most charming book. And here we have it in an illustrated edition with no less than thirty-nine pictures adding to the local interest of the story and including a reproduction of a fine photograph of Dunbar's beautiful bust of the authoress. Mr. Lucas's introduction includes a short biography of Mrs. Gaskell and a literary appreciation and account of "Cranford," with a list of Mrs. Gaskell's writings. Mr. Payne's notes to the illustrations, and in the appendix add considerably to the value of the book. "Cranford" is Knutsford in Cheshire, 16 miles from Manchester and Mr. Payne gives us here the full benefit of his local knowledge on the matters noted. To Unitarian readers Mrs. Gaskell's books have a special interest apart from their great literary merit, from the fact that she was the daughter of a Unitarian minister, and became the wife of another, the Rev. William Gaskell, M.A., of Cross-street Chapel, Manchester. The originals of some of the principal characters in this story were members of Unitarian families, Miss Mary and Miss Lucy Holland, cousins of Mrs. Gaskell having been the models from which Miss Deborah and Miss Matty were drawn. We heartily commend this beautiful edition of what Mr. Lucas characterises as Mrs. Gaskell's "most perfect and distinguished work."

The "Gathered Fragments," by Mr. Hawkes, make up a very presentable volume of the author's poetical compositions. They are characterised as inclusive of epic, legendary, dramatic, miscellaneous, serious and trivial. In his modesty Mr. Hawkes makes no claim "that any of these effusions are poetry in its highest sense." But those who know something of the author's work have learned to expect from him poetry of no mean quality. He who can put so much thought and imagination into rhythmic words as in the following verse, picked at random from the beginning of the book, is not a mere novice in his art—

"Age after age of fleeting time
Whose secrets none may tell;
Out of the fire-mist and the slime,
Out of the primal cell,
First beast, then savage, saint and seer,
The Man of God's own heart drew near."

No one can read such pieces as "The Man of Nazareth" without being charmed, helped, uplifted, and inspired. In descriptive poetical narrative Mr. Hawkes possesses exceptional power. He teaches much and teaches it well, as in "The Choice":

"Can'st thou not here detect
Some joy in living on;
Some blessing to be won;
Some link that binds thee still
To life's mixed good and ill?"—

for these are words to fit the case of the despairing pessimist everywhere. What finer statement of the Unitarian attitude could there be in brief than these lines at the close of "The Heretic?"—

"Holding as true that which is truth to me;
That which my conscience holds in honesty;
That which my reason sees in purity;
That which my heart feels in sincerity.
So will I pass my days beneath God's heaven."

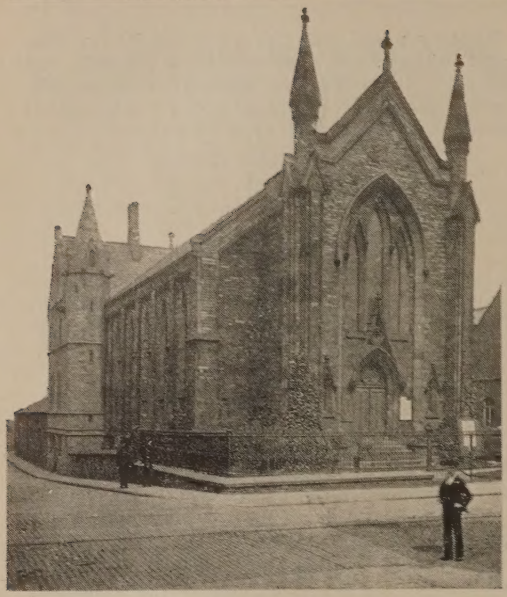
There are some forceful dramas in this book: "Abraham," "Esau," "Saul," "Servetus"; there is pointed satire as in "Sixty Years Ago," "The Woman Question" is a piece to delight those who read, "Votes for Women," or "The Common Cause." The "Odds and Ends" include pieces very suitable for recitation, both grave and gay. The volume closes with a collection of "Hymns" from the same author's pen. Four lines from one may be quoted here as a prayer:

"Our homes be brightened by Thy smile;
Our work be done as unto Thee;
Let no dark thought our mirth defile;
No sin enslave our liberty."

Many who know and love Mr. Hawkes, who is a widely respected Unitarian minister, will be glad to have these "Gathered Fragments," and those who do not know him will both know and love him if they only avail themselves of the opportunity of reading this—his book, which they cannot read without considerable profit and uplift to their souls.

"Helpers and Hinderers," by Miss Lilian Hall, consists of short addresses suitable for reading aloud in school or home. They first appeared in the children's column of the "Inquirer." There are no less than thirty of these "Addresses," the subject of the first giving the title to the book. They are wholesome and interesting, illustrated by incident and story, and each talk is expressed in simple and homely language, and teaches definitely and directly a plain moral or religious lesson. They are certain to be found very useful material for addresses from the superintendent's desk, or for talks to a class, or for readings. Parents and school teachers would do well to secure a copy. It is very good value for the money.

In Geo. Gissing's book entitled "Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft," he says (p. 48): "It is because nations tend to stupidity and baseness, that mankind moves so slowly; it is because individuals have a capacity for better things, that it moves at all."



Stockport Unitarian Church.

On July 27th, 1718, the Rev. Samuel Delarose, of the Tabernacle Congregational Chapel, Stockport, preached a very pronounced high Calvinist sermon which caused considerable dissatisfaction, and he was officially requested to resign his charge. This he would not do, and the aggrieved party withdrew, secured land, and built a chapel, 1721, in High-street, Stockport. This was established as a Presbyterian Chapel with an open trust-deed, and its earliest ministers were orthodox.

The first minister, James Hardy was ordained at Stockport in 1723. His grandfather, George Hardy, was Mayor of Altrincham in 1688, and his father, James Hardy, was Mayor of the same place in 1697. Joseph Clegg, the next minister, resigned in 1750. Then followed John Milne, 1750-1760; Joseph Booth, 1762-1773; — Porteous, 1781-1785; J. Wilson, D.D., 1785-1792; William Allard, 1793-1793; Benjamin Davis, 1793-1794; Edward Gibson, 1794-1799.

By this time the congregation must have changed from Presbyterianism and become Unitarian in its theology. The ministers at Cross-street Chapel, Manchester, had long since been Unitarian. The influence of Joseph Priestley and others had permeated the Presbyterians with anti-Trinitarianism. And now at Stockport during an interval of two years the pulpit was supplied by students from the Manchester Academy, which tended to fix and confirm the congregation in Unitarian views. Henceforth the ministers were decidedly and avowedly Unitarian.

Edward Higginson was minister 1801-1811; Samuel Parker, 1813-1833; Samuel Allard, B.A. (co-pastor) 1830; William Smith, 1834-1845. In 1838, Mr. Smith married Charlotte, daughter of William Coppock. In 1841 the present church in St. Peter's Gate was built at a cost of £3,000. The old chapel in High-street remained until 1860, when it was taken down, and the graveyard was enclosed by a stone wall, and so remains at this day. Upon the stones in that graveyard are recorded names of well-known inhabitants of Stockport, worshippers in the old chapel, including those of Ashton, Barrow, Bennison, Bentley, Cheetham, Coppock, Heys, Marsland, Northall, Orrell, Parker and Venables.

The other ministers were, David Davis, B.A., 1845-1848; James Bailey, 1848-1857; Andrew M. Creery, B.A., 1857-1863; Richard Pilcher, B.A., 1864-1866; James Black, M.A., 1867-1882; Alfred Payne, 1883-1890;; B. C. Constable 1891-1911; Rev. H. E. Perry, 1911——.

Of these Rev. James Black, M.A., was Missionary Tutor of the Unitarian Home Missionary College, Manchester, and editor of the "Unitarian Herald," during part of his ministry. In the year 1888, under the Rev. Alfred Payne, the chancel and two classrooms were added, costing £2,227. In October, 1892, the Jubilee of the opening of the present church, was celebrated by special sermons preached by Rev. P. H. Wicksteed, M.A. (Oct. 2nd), and Rev. Chas. Hargrove, M.A. (Oct. 16th), and a memorable conversazione (Oct. 3rd). The Jubilee of the Sunday School was observed Oct. 24th, 1895 by an interesting conversazione and re-union of old scholars.

In April, 1897, a handsome stained glass window costing £300, defrayed by a legacy, was placed in the chancel in memory of the late William Forrester and his wife Elizabeth; the church was beautifully renovated in 1901, stonework repaired, new leaded windows and incandescent lights put in, organ repaired, and school renovated, the schoolroom being in the basement of the church.

Of the Sunday School the following have served as superintendents: John Goode Johnson, John Shawcross, Rev. James Bailey, John Turner, Stephen Robinson, Joseph Morris, Orlando E. Heys, James Spedding, John F. Spedding, Rev. James Black, M.A., Rev. Alfred Payne, Nathaniel Calvert, J. Foster Hamilton, Walter Humphreys, Robert J. Smith, Rev. B. C. Constable, John Davies, Rev. H. E. Perry, and Charles Pollitt.

In addition to the Sunday School there are various connected institutions, including Singing Class, Social Meeting, Literary and Social Union, Ladies' Auxiliary, Branch of League of Unitarian Women, Girls' Club, Boys' Club, Young Women's Club, Men's Club, Ambulance Class, and other active agencies. The Sunday services have effective musical assistance from an efficient choir under the direction of Mr. O. E. Heys, choirmaster and Mr. E. T. Heys, organist.

During the ministry of the Rev. B. C. Constable a debt of £1,000 was paid off; special discourses explanatory of Unitarianism aroused considerable attention, and drew large attendances.

The following have been prominent members of this church, viz.: Mr. Henry Marsland, M.P., Mr. Peter Marsland, Major Henry Coppock (Town Clerk), Mr. A. Orrell,—these were worshippers in the old High-street Chapel and were founders of the present church, providing the greater part of the cost of its erection; Mr. Herbert Marsland, Mr. Alderman Stephen Robinson, Mr. Alderman J. G. Johnson, J.P.; Lieut.-Col. Henry Turner, Mr. Orlando E. Heys, Mr. Richard T. Heys, Mr. Edwin T. Heys, Mr. J. F. Spedding, Mr. Sydney Hollins, J.P., Col. J. G. Johnson, junr., V.D., J.P., Miss Eliza Johnson, Miss Hirst—a teacher in the Sunday School for over 50 years

Mr. Henry Marsland was Mayor of Stockport, and was M.P. for the town from 1835 to 1847; two other members became Mayor, Lieut.-Col. Henry Turner, 1892, and Mr. Alderman Giles Atherton, 1896-1897. Besides Major Coppock, another member, Mr. Walter Hyde was Town Clerk. Lieut.-Col. Henry Turner was a son of the late Mr. J. Aspinall Turner, M.P., and his great grandfather was Unitarian minister at Preston, and his father's first cousin was the Rev. Henry Turner, of Nottingham, the friend of James Martineau. When Lieut.-Col. Turner was elected Mayor of Stockport there was a considerable outburst of orthodox bigotry from certain Church of England Clergymen because by his invitation the members of the Town Council attended service at the Unitarian Church, which aroused considerable discussion in the local press largely in favour of the Unitarians and resulted in an accession of new members.

In membership of the Town Council, as magistrates, and in various other ways many useful public workers have gone forth from this church and Sunday school. Two former teachers are now in the ministry—Revs. W. R. Shanks (Leeds), and T. P. Spedding, Missionary agent for the British and Foreign Unitarian Association. No less than twenty of its young men have recently enlisted for military or naval service in our country's defence. That there is much earnest life in the church may be seen in its various institutions, and still more significantly in the fact that not long since, June, 1913, 40 young people were received into Church membership at a special dedication service.

In 1913 two Stockport Congregational ministers conducted services in the Unitarian Church, Rev. S. R. Laundy, of Hanover Chapel, who officiated at a Harvest Service; and Rev. H. J. Barton Lee, of Wycliffe Church, as one of the preachers for the Sunday School Anniversary; and in January, 1914, there was an exchange of pulpits between Rev. S. R. Laundy and Rev. H. E. Perry, the first time such an exchange with Unitarians had taken place in Stockport.

Quite recently the Church has been thoroughly renovated, the organ repaired, electric lighting installed, and other internal improvements effected, at a cost of about £375, most of which was raised by subscriptions in the congregation. The re-opening services conducted by the minister, Rev. H. E. Perry, took place, Sept. 20th, 1914.

The Stockport Unitarians have stood well for the Faith they profess, and they have not been slow to express it in various ways for the public good. They have leavened the community with more humane views of religion and life. With such a worthy tradition in the fine spirit of their predecessors they are encouraged to anticipate a future of larger possibilities, and of greater achievement for man and God.

Memorial Sundays.

By A. D. TYSSEN, D.C.L.

Jan 3 is the feast of S. Genevieve, the patron saint of Paris. It is given as the birthday of Cicero in B.C. 107, and of Douglas Jerrold in 1803; and as the death day of General Monk in 1670; and of Josiah Wedgwood in 1795. Some notices of these four worthies will be found in Chambers Book of Days. Josiah Wedgwood has also a place in our little book of Memorable Unitarians.

The "Christian Life" of Jan. 3 also tells us that on that day in 1694 an order was issued for burning "a brief but clear confutation of the doctrine of the Trinity," written by William Freke, who was fined and otherwise penalised.

Jan. 10 was the day of the death of Athanase Coquerel in 1868; and the birthday of Dr. Birkbeck in 1776, and of J. Hamilton Thom in 1808. Archbishop Laud was beheaded on this day in 1645; and Linnæus died on it in 1778. Short memoirs of Archbishop Laud and Dr. Birkbeck are given in Chambers Book of Days. The penny post was introduced on Jan. 10, 1848. But the day is also memorable for the death in 1904 of John Vickers, the author of the New Koran.

Jan. 17 is the feast of S. Anthony, concerning whom Latimer tells a story set out in Chambers Book of Days. It was the birthday of Montfaucon in 1655, of Benjamin Franklin in 1706, and of Mozart in 1756. On Jan. 17, 1859, a royal warrant was issued abolishing the special services of Guy Fawkes' Day, the execution of Charles I., and the restoration of Charles II. The warrant was afterwards confirmed by an Act of Parliament of the same year (22 Vict. c. 2).

Jan. 24 is the feast of S. Timothy. It was the birthday of Frederick the Great in 1712; and of Bishop Colenso in 1814. The "Christian Life" of Jan. 17 last tells us that Gregorio Pauli first avowed Unitarian views on this day in 1556, at the Synod of Secemin.

Jan. 31 was the birthday of Ben Johnson in 1574; and of Schubert in 1797. It saw the death of Charles Edward Stuart, the young Pretender, in 1798; and of Charles Haddon Spurgeon in 1892. The "Christian Life" records against it the death of a young minister, the Rev. Henry Turner, in 1822; and the conclusion of the trial of Dr. Newman for libelling a pervert from Romanism named G. Achilli in 1852. Many persons thought that the jury returned a wrong verdict in that case.

SUNDAY SCHOOL HELPS.

Lesson Notes on The Life of Jesus.

Jan. 3rd.—THE BIRTH OF JESUS.

Scripture Readings, Matt. 2; Luke 2, 8—33. References: Gannett's "Childhood of Jesus," 71-89. Giran's "Jesus of Nazareth," 45-58.

1. WHERE WAS JESUS BORN? The two accounts agree in stating that Jesus was born at Bethlehem of Judea. But there are weighty reasons for believing that this is an error. Jesus was frequently called the "Nazarene"; the earliest Gospel writer says that Nazareth was "his own country" (Mark 6, 1-4); he is usually called 'Jesus of Nazareth" in the Gospels, and never of Bethlehem; his parents, Joseph and Mary, lived at Nazareth (Luke 2, 4-5) before he was born. But there were reasons why it should be said afterwards that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. After Jesus died there grew up the doctrine that Jesus was the Messiah; but the Messiah was to be of the house of David and to be born in David's city in Bethlehem of Judea, as was prophesied (Matt. 2, 5; Micah 5, 2); therefore it was necessary to assert that Jesus was of David's line and that he was born in David's city. Hence Luke finds it necessary to explain how it was that Jesus was born in Bethlehem seeing that the parents lived at Nazareth. The explanation is an impossible one, as the decree mentioned (Mark 2, 1) was never issued, the only census recorded in history of that time being after Herod's death, some years after Jesus was born. There was a Bethlehem just outside Nazareth, and there may have been some confusion between the two Bethlehems, for the Gospel records were not written till long after Jesus died.

2. WHEN WAS JESUS BORN? According to the usual Scripture Chronology Jesus was born before the death of Herod the Great, who died B.C. 4. When the Christian Era was fixed by Dionysius Exiguus, in the 6th century, he put it at least four years too late, so that Jesus was born quite four years earlier than is usually stated. Our B.C. 1 is the same as 754 A.U.C., of the Roman reckoning, and Herod died 751 A.U.C. But there is so much uncertainty that some writers say that Jesus was born from four to eight years B.C. The year of his birth is therefore quite unknown. That is not a matter for surprise, for there was no strict record of births. Not till long afterwards were people curious to know, and then it became a mere surmise. Nor is it known in what month or on what day of the month the event happened. The date December 25th has been artificially fixed as a convenience to take the place of a pagan festival which was held at that time. And even our present December 25th comes 11 days earlier than it was previous to 1751, when by the change from old to new style of reckoning the 3rd of September was called the 14th. So it is impossible to know either the year, month or day when Jesus was born.

3. JESUS, A REAL HUMAN BEING. That he really was born and lived amongst men is the important fact. That he was the child of human parents is undeniable. "Thy father and I have sought thee," said Mary his mother (Luke 2, 48). He is called "Joseph's son" (Luke 4, 22; John 1, 45; 6, 42), and "the carpenter's son" (Matt. 13, 55). The legendary and supernatural accounts of his birth surrounding the event with wonders, indicate the admiration and love of his followers long after he had passed away, and their exalted estimation of his greatness.

Jan. 10th.—HIS HOME AND KINDRED.

Scripture Reading, Mark 6, 1-6; 3, 31-34. References: Gannett, 90-96; Giran, 58-61.

Nazareth was quite a village, in the mountains of Galilee, 65 miles north of Jerusalem, and having a population of 1,500 to 2,000 inhabitants. It possessed a synagogue, a fountain, and a public square. The house of Joseph and Mary would be low and square, with a flat roof, and just one large room without windows, the light streaming in through the large wide-open door. There is scarcely any furniture, no tables, a rug or carpet here or there. In this room the household take their meals, and it is their sleeping apartment. It is also Joseph's workshop. There is his carpenter's bench; there are some shelves for utensils and tools, and one or two ovens for cooking, for in this room Mary has to prepare the meals. There are at least seven children; Jesus the first-born and four brothers — James, Joses, Judas, and Simon, and two sisters (Mark 6, 3). The home is humble and poor, but as their wants were few they did not feel the poverty. Joseph and Mary were well known and widely respected, as is evidenced by the various allusions in the Gospel records. Whether Joseph was descended from the royal line of David as the genealogies of Matthew and Luke make out—or not—does not matter. It is evident that apart from their son Jesus the record of Joseph and Mary would not have come down to us. To trace Joseph's descent from David was most probably an afterthought. In any case the results prove that they were good parents. Though when older his relatives failed to understand him, and lacked sympathy with his opinions, there was close family attachment. His father died when Jesus was approaching manhood probably, for later his mother and his brethren are mentioned as if Joseph were then no longer living.

Jan. 17th.—THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS.

Scripture Reading, Luke 2, 40-52. References: Gannett 96-98; Giran, 61-63.

Jesus was carefully reared. Up to twelve years of age at least he had the advantage of training from both father and mother. We are told in Luke that as a child he grew strong, and that he became filled with wisdom (2, 40) and that the grace of God was upon him—which indicates that he was physically vigorous and healthy, that he was mentally alert and quick to acquire knowledge, that he was intelligent and particularly sensible, that he was good to look upon

and seemed to be specially favoured by God. There is a story told in the same Gospel of the visit to the Temple at Jerusalem when the boy Jesus was 12 years old. Beyond this there is no other information concerning his childhood except certain fables in apocryphal books outside the New Testament, which serve to show how afterwards the wondering imagination of credulous Christians tried to fill in the blank space left by utter lack of certain knowledge. But this story of the visit to the Temple (Luke 2, 41-51) expresses the affectionate anxiety of the parents for the safety and welfare of their son. From this account it may be inferred that he was tall for his years, and that his appearance along with a grave and thoughtful manner and remarkable intelligence, caused him to seem older than he really was. He evidently found considerable pleasure in listening to the discussions of the teachers, and was able to join in by putting apt questions and making equally fitting replies when questioned in return. What little we do know from this scant information suffices to show that his childhoom was passed under happy conditions such as to favour a bright and hopeful view of life and to encourage a loving and sunny as well as a thoughtful and studious disposition.

Jan. 24th.—THE EDUCATION OF JESUS.

Scripture Reading, Matt. 18, 1-8; Luke, 4, 16-22. References: Gannett, 98-101; Giran, 63-66. Carpenter's "Life in Palestine," 53-57.

Jesus was well trained. His education was in the home, in the synagogue at school, in the trade his father taught him, and in the experiences of life. It is certain that he would be taught the Commandments (Exodus 20, 1-17; Deut. 5, 6-21), and the verses Deut. 4-5, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul ,and with all thy might." From the verses which follow it is very clear what great importance was attached to home teaching: "These words. . . . shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Joseph and Mary were devout people, and would be careful to follow these injunctions. The teaching was by frequent repetition, learning by heart or memorising, as there were no books, and rolls of Scripture were not plentiful. At five years of age Jesus would attend school at the Synagogue or Meeting House and be instructed in the Scriptures, and continue regularly through his boyhood onwards. And he learned his father's trade, for he himself came to be spoken of as "the carpenter" (Mark 6, 3). This was part of his education. There was besides this the discipline of life, what is learned from experience the great teacher, which taught Jesus much, learning from all he saw and felt. From the world of nature around him he drew much instruction, for when he grew into manhood he knew much of birds and flowers and cornfields, and seed sowing, and weather signs. From the world of human beings too he learned greatly as his many parables and wise sayings afterwards proved.

Jan. 31st.—HIS RELIGIOUS TRAINING.

Scripture Reading, Psalm 34. References: Gannett, 139-162; Giran, 1-18.

Jesus was trained in the national religious faith of the Jewish people to which he belonged. That Faith was expressed briefly in the "Shema," Deut. 6, 4-9; 11, 13-21; Numbers 15, 37-41. These famous passages were recited daily by every pious Jew. They constituted the great profession of Jewish Faith. The chief source of religious instruction was the Jewish Scriptures contained in what has since come to be called the Old Testament. These Scriptures were divided under three sections: The Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. The Law consisting of the first five books called since by the Greek name Pentateuch, were the most prized of all the Scriptures. They were believed to have been written by Moses. But we know now that he did not write them. "The Law" was the Law of Moses, and when it was asked what was in the Law the question often took the form, What did Moses say?—Mark 10, 3. Jesus acquired a thorough knowledge of these books of the Law, so that when he grew up he was able to discuss as the equal of any of the Rabbi's who confronted him. He knew also the Prophets well, and the Writings. From instruction in these Scriptures and attendance at worship in the Synagogue and periodically at the Temple, and by means of the family devotions at home Jesus received his religious training. The chief doctrines of the Religion which he was taught may be said to be expressed in the following Scripture verses:—

"Hear, O Israel, THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."—Deut. 6, 4-5.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."—Leviticus 19, 18.

"O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."—Psalm 96, 9.

"What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"—Micah 6, 8.

"The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteausness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."——Ezek., 18, 20.

"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"—Gen. 18, 25.

"Like as a father pitieth his children; so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him."—Ps. 103, 13.

"Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us?"—Malachi 2, 10.

"All souls are mine."—Ezek. 18, 4.

BIBLE PROBLEMS.

(5)—THE BABEL STORY.

(By the Rev. E. RATTENBURY HODGES.)

The outstanding feature of this story is a tower. The reference to this remarkable building and therewith the Hebrew tale, are contained in Gen. xi., 1-9. Note, however, that v. 1, says "whole earth." It is unlikely that the ancient writer meant this, but the whole "land" or region between the mountains of Edom and the Mediterranean. The same Hebrew word is used when the land of Israel or of Egypt is alluded to. As it stands, v. 1 contradicts v. 4.

We will first deal with the tower and then with the tale.

Travellers in Persia on nearing the west bank of the Euphrates and getting round a little to the south of the site of Babylon, see an immense ruin. Being based upon the surrounding plain, it is more impressive than it would otherwise be. The people of the country call it "The mountain of Nimrod." It is about 280ft. high, and consists of a four-cornered building of baked bricks cemented with asphalt or bitumen. This gigantic base is about 660 feet long on each side, and a series of towers, one above the other, once stood upon it. A contemporary of Nehemiah (about 450 B.C.), the old Greek traveller Herodotus, "the Father of History," as he has been called, visited Babylon. He gives a most interesting account of that vast and wonderful city,* and also describes this enormous tower of the god Bel, "Lord of the Earth." Here is his simple and graphic story: "In the middle of each division of the city fortified buildings were erected, in one the royal palace, with a spacious and strong enclosure and brazen gates, and in the other the precinct of Jupiter Belus, which in my time was still in existence, a square building of two stadia† on every side. In the midst of this precinct is built a solid tower of a stadium both in length and breadth, and on this tower rose another, and another upon that, to the number of eight. And an ascent to these is outside, running spirally round all the towers. About the middle of the ascent there is a landing-place and seats to rest on. . . . and in the uppermost tower stands a spacious temple, and in this temple is placed, handsomely furnished, a large couch, and by its side a table of gold. No statue has been set up within it, nor does any mortal pass the night there, except only a native woman chosen by the god out of the whole nation, as the Chaldeans say, who are priests of this deity. . . . There is also another temple below, in it is a golden statue of Jupiter (or Bel) seated, and near it is placed a large table of gold, the throne also and the step are of gold, and another large altar, where full-grown sheep are sacrificed."

The idea of setting a temple on the very summit of this tower seems to have been due to the belief that "Bel only visited the high places of the earth, and could therefore stay upon the cool heights of this artificial mountain, but not in the warmer air at its foot." This tower-temple was therefore Bab-el—the gate of El or Bel (or E-sagila, the house of the high head.)

We can easily understand that an ancient Hebrew priest or scribe in his own country would have but a feeble idea of the languages of surrounding nations. The exclusive habits and customs enjoined by the Levitical system would tend to restrict knowledge or inquiry in that direction. But when such a Jewish sage or priest was a captive in mighty Babylon, he heard around him languages spoken by other races, which like his own, were held in bondage by the ruthless conqueror. He reflected as to the origin of such a variety of tongues. The Egyptian and Assyrian were allied to his own, but these were quite different. If all men are the offspring of Adam how can this diversity be accounted for? The sage formed an idea, and may at length have regarded it as an inspired revelation. These diversities of speech, thought he, are evidently a curse from God. So the story came to be written.

Mankind at first had one language and kept together. On their wanderings they found a level fertile land where they could settle. It was the plain of Shinar. There were no stones or rocks for use in building, but clay was in abundance. This they baked to brick, and using bitumen for cement built not only a city but a very lofty tower, to be a sign of their strength and skill, and also a rallying point or landmark to prevent their being too far dispersed. But Yahveh became uneasy at their newly awakened activity. He "came down" to get a nearer view of the building, and then returned to his lofty mountain abode and took counsel with his sons (or the sons of Elohim.) Yahveh then said: This is but the beginning of men's ambition; soon nothing will be too hard for them to do. Come, let us go down together and bring their language to confusion.

Yahveh beheld the great tower by which they would scale the very heights of heaven and enter into His counsels. This sinful ambition Yahveh at once punished, and this tower of Bab-El is the tower of (Aramaic-Balbel) confusion, thus arose many tongues and the scattering of mankind over the earth. Here is one attempt at exposition. But it is significant that fragments of Assyrian accounts of the Creation, Fall, Flood, and Confusion of Tongues have been discovered, and each more or less like the Bible stories.

Hence the latter story is probably much older than the Hebrew legend. In remote times the great tower was in a more or less ruinous state, and wandering Arabs (Aramæns) would be apt to exclaim, Balbel-here God put man's speech to confusion. This view is the more likely because a fragment has lately been found of a pre-Semitic account of the Fall and the Deluge, etc. It consists of about 200 lines and is the Sumerian‡ version of these legends. ("Times," 28/7/14). — (To be concluded next month.)

* A garden city, about five times larger than Greater London, according to a recent lecturer at the British Museum.

† A stadium was equal to 100 paces.

‡ The Sumerians and Akkadians were pioneers in civilization in Mesopotamia. Their priest-king Gudea reigned about 2450 B.C. Their language was of Mongolian type. See p. 54, Helps to the Study of the Bible, Oxford University Press.

British League of Unitarian and other Liberal Christian Women.

Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, W.C.
Hon. Secretaries: Miss H. Brooke Herford and Miss Violet Preston.

The following illustrations of Fellowship help given during the last few months may interest members of the League. They may also serve to remind some branches to use the Fellowship organisation and goodwill more freely than they do at present.

1. Miss A. has lately gone to a Church of England Training College for two years in a town where we have no place of worship. The Branch Secretary sent particulars to the League without delay, so that the Fellowship Committee could then get into direct touch with the girl. She replied: "I wish that a Unitarian Church was here, but I should like to join the Fellowship section as you suggest, it will help me a great deal when I feel rather lonely about the religion question. . . . I was up at Oxford in 1912 (to the Sunday School Teachers' Summer Session), and heard you speak about the Fellowship section. I thought what a splendid work it could do but never thought I should need its help." The Fellowship Committee appointed a Fellowship Helper for the young woman, and within a few days the whole matter was satisfactorily linked up. The committee fortunately also knew a Unitarian lady in the district, and she will gladly show some frendliness to Miss A. during her College life.

2. Miss B. had been a year at a Training College before the Fellowship Committee heard about her lack of opportunity to take that part in church life that she had been used to. On being asked by the F. Committee if she would join the Fellowship for her remaining time at College she replied: "I should like very much to become a Fellowship member, as I always like to know what other people of our Faith are doing and thinking. I should also like to be kept in closer touch with those thoughts on religion which appeal to me most, and this it seems hardly possible to do while at College. . . . Ever since I came to College I have had to deplore the fact that there is a great temptation for us not to attend our own chapel and this seems particularly harmful to people of our age when we are just beginning to think seriously on these matters. . . . Thank you again for the kind interest you have taken in me."

It is letters such as these that make us realise how important our Fellowship work may be—for individuals and for the corporate good of our churches. It is for us to hold and strengthen this loyalty and enthusiasm and love for our Faith which lie within the hearts of our young women, ready to respond to auy sympathy on our part. In this every branch and every member can help.

A few weeks ago our Fellowship representative in Canada, Mrs. Willer, of Montreal, sent us the names of eleven men from our Canadian churches who have come over with the Expeditionary Force. It was agreed that efforts should be made to show these visitors some kindly attention, and to each one has been sent a cordial offer of hospitality from some member of our committee in case he is able to visit London. A number of answers have come in, gladly accepting the invitations and showing that the courtesy has been fully appreciated. —H. B. H.

National Unitarian Temperance Association

Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, W.C.

President: Mrs. H. SHAEN SOLLY. Hon. Treasurer: Mr. E. BUSER.
Hon. Sec.: Mr. E. F. COWLIN, 19, Northwood Road, Forest Hill, London.

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR TREATING.

Every speaker and worker should direct attention to the evil of liquor treating.

Good would be done by printing the following on a neat card and having it distributed in the forthcoming Christmas-time:—

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR TIPS.

Be generous, but don't give intoxicating liquor to Postmen, Messengers, Carters, Vanmen or Railwaymen.

Many a man has got into trouble, both he and his family have suffered, because he did not like to refuse the liquor offered him at the festive time.

Be generous. Show him how you appreciate him with something that can't do him harm.

Give money if you can, or if you cannot de that, give warm milk, or cocoa, or food.

Field-Marshal Lord Methuen in an appeal to the new soldier, says: No one recognises more than I do the curse that drink is to our country. It ruins body and mind alike, besides being intensely degrading. Women and men alike are making us ashamed of ourselves as a nation, and as a vice-president of the R.A.T.A., it is right that I should speak out quite straight in this crisis of our Empire. The Regular Army and our Navy are examples of sobriety. It is not these men who are to blame, it is the men in Great Britain and from the Colonies alike to whom we appeal not to degrade our uniform. I don't altogether blame them; they have not had the chance of discipline we have had, it is a new life to them, it is a time of intense excitement, and foolish civilians out of mistaken kindness lead them into temptations. I appeal to these gallant men who represent this great Empire to act their part as England expects them to do, and throw away from them the vile curse of drink as the Russians have done, so that they may make themselves fit in body and nerve to face a foe that is as courageous as he is brutal in war.

The late Lord Roberts, F.M., said recently: "There are so many temptations connected with the provision and management of liquor for soldiers, that if it were possible I would like to see every man in the army a total abstainer." And he further declared, "Give me a teetotal army, and I will lead it anywhere."

A Proposed Liberal Religious Union.

Our attention has been called to a letter signed by Dr. Tyssen, which appeared in the "Christian Life" of May 30, 1914. He suggests that liberal-minded religious people of all denominations should join in enrolling themselves in an association to be called the Moral Religious Union, and in making a declaration to the following effect:

"The members of the Moral Religious Union entertain a conviction that the universe is governed by a Supreme God of perfect goodness; and that they are themselves immortal spirits responsible to God for the use which they make of the powers of action with which he has endowed them.

"They believe that God judges all His creatures according as, having regard to their circumstances and capacities, they sincerely endeavour to learn and to do what is right in His sight.

"They resolve to respect the religious convictions of all their sincere neighbours as they desire those neighbours to respect their own.

They resolve to lead strictly moral religious lives, and therefore to be industrious, honest, sober, chaste, and prudent.

"They resolve not to bet or gamble in any way.

"They resolve (1) to avoid extravagance; (2) to strive to provide honestly for themselves and for all who are dependent upon them; (3) to pay promptly all debts which they incur, and all rates and taxes for which they become liable;(4) to endeavour by saving insurance or otherwise to provide enough money to pay the duties, and defray the other expenses payable on their deaths; and (5) to endeavour to regulate their expenditure so as to have a further surplus from time to time and apply the same or some part thereof for charitable and religious purposes.

"They recognise that imprudent early marriages entail poverty and misconduct, and they resolve to abstain from such marriages and to dissuade others from contracting them.

"They resolve to be kind and courteous to all persons; to be considerate towards all whom they employ; and to work honestly and well for all who employ them.

"They resolve to attach themselves to the religious organisation which teaches faith in God in the form which they believe to be most true; to support that organisation financially and personally; and to attend a religious service of that organisation at least once on the day or on one of the days on which its weekly services are held, whenever they can conveniently do so."

Dr. Tyssen's idea is that the religious training of the young should be pointed towards leading them to join such an association, when they attain a proper age; and that their admission might be signalized by a confirmation service suited to the occasion.

We willingly lay this statement before our readers, and invite expressions of opinion upon it.

(Dr. Tyssen thinks that "Liberal" Religious Union would be a better name.)

The Wide World.

In Italy the Rev. Mr. Conte has issued a little paper for propaganda purposes entitled "The Echo of the Unitarians of Italy."

The department of Comity and Fellowship of the American Unitarian Association, of which Rev. Dr. C. W. Wendte is secretary, has been instrumental in establishing a federation of eight or ten denominations including Friends, Unitarians, Christians, Universalists, Ethical Culturists, Reform Jews, etc., under the title of the National Federation of Religious Liberals, which has already held large meetings in Philadelphia, New York, and Rochester, and will hold its next session February, 1815, in Philadelphia.

The Rev. Philip S. Thacher has resigned his ministry of the Unitarian Church at Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, and settled at Hyde Park, Mass., U.S.A.

Dr. Stanton Coit, of London, England, is in America for the purpose of organising a National Society to be called "The Church of the Republic."

The International Committee of Unitarian Women representing several countries has helped nearly 100 people in securing communication with relatives and friends in Germany by the co-operation of the Dutch, Danish, and Swiss women.

The recent conference of the Churches of the Middle States (U.S.A.) and Canada discussed the proposed abolition of the name "Unitarian," and the feeling against any change was very marked.

The Rev. E. Ethelred Brown, Kingston, Jamaica, appeals for financial assistance towards the erection of the new Unitarian Church in that city.

The Canadian Unitarian Churches have now a monthly organ of their own, "The Canadian Unitarian Bulletin," issued by the Canadian Unitarian Association. From this we learn that Rev. G. C. Sharpe's Church at Vancouver is hard hit by the war, that the Calgary Church is without a minister, that the Edmonton Church has now its own building, and that the Montreal Church now employs a trained lady parish worker.

THE SWEETER IT GROWS.

It is a magnificent sight to see a man or woman grow old gracefully. That aged Unitarian of America, Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, author of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," said, in her 91st year, "The deeper I drink of the cup of life, the sweeter it grows—the sugar all at the bottom." This is a beautiful thought by a very lovable and useful woman, who, notwithstanding the weight of years then resting upon her, still exercised a strong and wide-spread influence for good.

Notes and News.

TO CORRESPONDENTS: Communications connected with the business of this Magazine should be addressed to the EDITOR, 36, Burlington Road, South Shore, BLACKPOOL, except Calendar matter and corrected proofs which should be sent direct to the printer. Fill Money Orders to "South Shore." Any errors in transmission of parcels, or in the condition of the copies sent, should be reported to the Editor promptly. Churches and Societies should note that we have not space for extended reports of services and meetings. Unsolicited M.S. contributions if required to be returned, should be accompanied with a stamped addressed envelope; and inquiries by letter should include postage stamp for reply.

May all our readers have a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

Some weeks ago the Sunday School Association issued a circular to our Sunday Schools making various suggestions of "War Emergency Arrangements" mainly for the occupying of the time of young people thrown out of employment. No doubt such suggestions have been found helpful in districts where the special need for them exists.

Owing to cost of production some slight revision of charges on parcels of the "Unitarian Monthly" is rendered necessary. Henceforth copies will be supplied at 3s. 6d. and cost of carriage per 100; 50 copies 2s. 6d. and postage; 25 copies 1s. 6d. post free; 12 copies 10d. post free. Will clients please note?

The Rev. John Haynes Holmes, of New York, co-pastor and successor of the late Dr. Robert Collyer, has been asked by the Collyer family to write the biography of Robert Collyer, and asks for the loan of any letters received from Dr. Collyer.

The Nantwich congregation is about to place in their chapel a tablet in memory of the late Philip Barker, the founder of Willaston School.

"Intercessional" services have been held by Unitarians at Knutsford, Belper and other places. Does this agree with the Unitarian thought of God?

At Mottram a sale of work has realised £90, and another at Mossley £167.

The Mill Hill Chapel, Leeds, has just celebrated its 242nd anniversary.

The Chowbent congregation has contributed £70 worth of suitable clothing in response to the appeal on behalf of 25,000 suffering Belgian children in Holland, in addition to other sums raised for local and National Relief Funds.

The Unitarian Van Mission report for the past open-air season records that 250 meetings were held from the middle of May to the outbreak of the war, with an attendance of over 50,000. There is a deficit of £200 on the cost of working, and the Missionary Agent, Rev. T. P. Spedding, appeals for contributions from all well-wishers of the Mission, which should be addressed to him at Essex Hall, London, W.C.

Owing to the war the autumnal meetings of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association were not held this year; for the same reason the National Triennial Conference of Unitarian Churches which had been fixed for next April at Leeds, has been postponed.

The Committee of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association held a reception at Essex Hall Dec. 8th of Japanese professors, teachers, and students residing in London, many of whom had been at German seats of learning and took refuge in England at the outbreak of the war. Rev. Charles Hargrove presided, and the Rev. Principal Dr Estlin Carpenter delivered a masterly address on religion in Japan.

Amongst Unitarian Churches from which young men have gone to join His Majesty's forces are the following: The Church of the Divine Unity, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 16; Bank Street, Bury, 37; Church of the Messiah, Birmingham, 48; Poole Chapel, 3; Sheffield Upper Chapel, 35; Sheffield, Attercliffe, 14; Sheffield, Upperthorpe, 15; Oldham, 15; Gainsborough, 3; Blackfriars Mission, London, 26; Monton, 21; Liverpool, Ullet-road, 35; Leeds, Mill Hill, 30; Manchester, Dob Lane, Failsworth, 21 (2 have died wounded at the front); Croydon F.C. Church, 10; Aberdare, Highland Place, 4, and Old Meeting, 2; Stockport, 20; Altrincham, 14; Highgate, 10 and 2 nurses; Stalybridge, 28; Bolton, Unity, 24; Coseley, 9; Horsham, 9; Liscard, 15; Oldbury, 6; Padiham, 26; Chesham, Bury, 17; Bridgwater, 6; Evesham, 14; Manchester, Upper Brook-street, 29; Nottingham, High Pavement, 39; Taunton, 13; Liverpool, Mill Street Mission, 70, and Hamilton Road Mission, 30; Rhydygwin, Cardiganshire, 2: Aberdeen, 15; Bank-street, Bolton, 45; Chowbent, 42; Colne, 5; Dukinfield 47; Glossop, 10; Bermondsey, London, 10; Northampton, 7; Stourbridge, 8; Tavistock, 9; Bristol, 50; and from 23 congregations in Ireland 162.

A concert at Gaskell Hall, Longsight, Manchester, for the benefit of British wounded soldiers, Dec. 11th, realised £25.

Padiham Sale of Work, Dec. 12th, produced £117 11s. 5d.

A memorial portrait of the late Rev. H. R. Tavener has been placed in the Hunslet Church.

The Moseley Unitarian Church, Birmingham, has secured a minister who begins in January.

Rev. H. Maguire, B.Sc., of Wareham, has been recognised as a fully accredited minister.

MINISTERIAL CHANGES: Rev. Dr. Hitchcock, for 12 years Roman Catholic, has been welcomed and recognised as Unitarian minister at Chatham; Mr. Walter, M. Long, has accepted appointment as lay worker in charge of College Chapel, Stepney; Rev. H. H. Johnson was publicly welcomed to the ministry of the Evesham Chapel, Dec. 10th.

DEATHS: Marion Thompson, of Cardiff, Nov. 20th, 69; Mrs. John Bowring, Liverpool, Nov. 23rd, 77; Miss Mary K. Montgomery, Chester, Nov. 24th, 45; Mr. Philip H. Holt, Liverpool, Nov. 27th, 84; Mr. Arthur Orrett, of Chester, Dec. 1st, 60; Mrs. Alfred Balstone, Poole, Dec. 2nd, 86; Mrs. Howard S. Smith, Birmingham, Dec. 6th, 66; Mrs. C. J. Spence, of N. Shields, at Cheadle, Dec. 7th, 46; Mrs. C. Wibberley, Kew Gardens, S.W., Dec. 7th, 61; Mr. Reginald B. Treeby, of Liverpool, lost on H.M.S. Bulwark in Sheerness Harbour, Nov. 26th; Mr. N. M. Taylor, London, Dec. 14th, 85; Mr. John Smyth, M.A., Banbridge, 84.

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